

Message Text

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SUBJ: REFORMS IN THE EX-SECRET SERVICE

REF: MEXICO 8583

1. FOLLOWING REVELATIONS OF A TAX SCANDAL AND EXTORTION SCHEME INVOLVING AGENTS OF THE FORMER MEXICAN SECRET SERVICE, NOW CALLED THE INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION FOR THE PREVENTION OF DELINQUENCY, NEW DIPD COMMANDER RAFAEL ROCHA CORDERO HAS ANNOUNCED A SERIES OF REFORMS TO MAKE HIS PERSONNEL MORE RESPONSIVE TO THEIR SUPERIORS AND TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC. INCLUDED AMONG THE REFORMS, WHICH ROCHA SAID WERE DESIGNED TO RESTRUCTURE A MEXICO CITY POLICE CORPS THAT HAD BECOME A "NEST OF DELINQUENTS", ARE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

A. LISTS OF NEW DETAINEES WILL BE POSTED EVERY TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AT VARIOUS POLICE HEADQUARTERS IN AN EFFORT TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC OF FAMILY MEMBERS WHO MAY HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AND TO ELIMINATE THE PRACTICE OF HOLDING PEOPLE WITHOUT NOTIFYING SUPERIOR OFFICERS.

B. WITHIN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS, DETAINEES WILL EITHER BE RELEASED OR WILL BE REMANDED TO A PUBLIC PROSECUTOR (MINISTERIO PUBLICO) WHO WILL DETERMINE DISPOSITION OF THE CASE.

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C. PRIVATE HOLDING JAILS, SUCH AS THE ONE FORMER

CHIEF INSPECTOR TANUS ALLEGEDLY USED TO DETAIN ELEVEN PEOPLE WHILE HE EXTORTED THEM, WILL BE ELIMINATED. ROCHA NOTED THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HOLDING JAILS NEVER HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED; INDIVIDUAL COMMANDERS HAD APPROPRIATED AREAS FOR THAT PURPOSE ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE.

D. THE SECRET SERVICE AGENT PATROLS WILL BE REINSTITUTED. ABOLISHED BY RECENTLY DEPOSED VISION COMMANDER JORGE OBREGON, THE PATROLS ARE INTENDED TO PUT MORE AGENTS OUT ON THE STREET, ALLOWING ARRESTING OFFICERS TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON THE INVESTIGATIONS OF CRIMES THEY UNCOVER.

E. A STAFF OF SIXTY SO-CALLED "PERMANENT GUARDS", WHOSE SOLE DUTY IS TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM LOWER LEVEL OFFICERS AND PASS THEM ON TO SUPERIORS, WILL BE ELIMINATED.

F. THE POSTS OF DELEGATION COMMANDER, LARGELY CEREMONIAL OFFICES FORMING ANOTHER LAYER OF BUREAUCRACY BETWEEN AGENTS ON THE STREET AND SUPERIORS RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERALL DIVISION OPERATION, WILL BE ABOLISHED. INCUMBENTS OF THESE POSITIONS WILL BE REASSIGNED BY CENTRAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS.

2. THE GOAL OF THESE REFORMS IS TO INSTITUTIONALIZE AND LEGALIZE THE OPERATIONS OF THE DIPD, WHICH, IT IS NOW BEING REVEALED, WAS A RATHER FREE-WHEELING ORGANIZATION UNDER OBREGON'S COMMAND. HOWEVER, A COLUMN APPEARING IN THE MEXICO CITY DAILY EXCELSIOR THE DAY AFTER THE REFORMS WERE ANNOUNCED INSISTED THAT CHANGES IN THE INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION ARE NOT SUFFICIENT; THE DIPD SHOULD BE TOTALLY ABOLISHED. COLUMNIST RAUL PRIETO NOTED THAT WHEN PEDRO ZORRILLA MARTINEZ, NOW GOVERNOR OF NUEVO LEON, WAS ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE FEDERAL DISTRICT, HE TERMED THE DIPD "UNCONSTITUTIONAL, BUT NECESSARY." ACCORDING TO PRIETO, THE WISE COURSE IS TO ABOLISH THIS INHERENTLY ILLEGAL DIVISION NOW -- WHILE IT IS VULNERABLE.

3. COMMENT: IF REPORTS OF DIPD ABUSES OF POWER ARE TRUE, THE ABOLITION OF THIS DIVISION WOULD BE A POSITIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STEP TOWARD REFORM OF THE ENTIRE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM. HOWEVER, SINCE THE DIPD IS THE PLAINCLOTHES DETECTIVE DIVISION OF THE MEXICO CITY POLICE AND AS SUCH A MUCH-NEEDED UNIT, ELIMINATION OF THE DIVISION IS A VIRTUAL IMPOSSIBILITY. INDEED, IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE IF THE REFORMS THEMSELVES ARE MORE THAN TEMPORARY WINDOW DRESSING, DESIGNED TO ENABLE DIPD TO WEATHER THE CURRENT EXTORTION SCANDAL.

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